REMARKS:

Independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to more clearly distinguish them from the prior art. These amendments are supported, for example, by the same parts of the described embodiments supporting dependent claims 3 and 12.

Responding to the § 102 section of the Office Action, the rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 8-12, 14 and 16-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(3) as being clearly anticipated by Rowe (U.S. Patent No. 6,394,907) is respectfully traversed. Rowe does not teach or suggest at least a print medium that excludes a machine-readable credit amount and does not teach or suggest a central authority arranged to ... transmit the stored credit amount through the network to the interface in response to validation of the validation code, the credit amount being displayed on the display.

More specifically, Rowe does not teach or suggest a medium generator arranged to generate a print medium comprising a machine-readable validation code to the exclusion of a machine-readable credit amount. Contrary to claim 1, Rowe teaches that a machine-readable credit amount is generated on the medium. In Col. 6, lines 34-35, Rowe teaches that a "printed ticket voucher may contain information including: 1) a ticket value." Col. 6, lines 56-58 state: "A unique bar-code may be printed on the ticket voucher which may be read with a bar-code scanner to obtain information from the ticket." In Col. 12, lines 44-45, Rowe teaches that a cashless instrument may include transaction information, "including 1) a value." In Col. 13, lines 3-6 state: "when a debit card is used as the cashless instrument, the game player may be able to directly deposit the award on the debit card into a bank account...." This necessarily teaches

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that the value on th instrument is machine-readable and that the value is a credit amount. In Col. 13, lines 6-11, Rowe teaches:

> In 414, a validation request is sent from the cashless transaction validation site 400 to the cashless server 10. The validation request may be an information packet containing the transaction information stored on the cashless instrument in 404 and stored in the cashless server database in 408.

This statement also teaches that that the value on the instrument is machine-readable.

In summary, Rowe teaches that a machine-readable credit amount is generated on his cashless instrument. This is the opposite of the claimed feature of generating a print medium comprising a machine-readable validation code to the exclusion of a machine-readable credit amount. Thus, Rowe teaches away from the subject matter of claim 1. MPEP § 2144.09, 2145 X.D.2 states: "It is improper to combine references where the references teach away from the combination." The same MPEP section applies equally to rejections based on a single reference. As a result, the applicants respectfully request that the § 102 rejection be withdrawn.

In the response to arguments, page 4, the Examiner relies on a debit card. However, a debit card is not a print medium. Claim 1 is allowable for these reasons alone.

Rowe also does not teach or suggest a central authority arranged to store the validation code and a credit amount received from the network in response to generating the print medium as claimed. As described in Col. 12, lines 43-49, cashless

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instrument information is stored in server 100, not clearing house server 136. Server 100 is a local server that is part of local property 104 at which the instrument is generated, not a central authority as claimed. In Col. 13, lines 44-51, Rowe teaches:

> In [step] 418 [Fig. 4], when the cashless instrument was not generated locally, the cashless server may mark the validation request pending in a local database and send a request for validation to the central clearinghouse in 420. The request for validation from the cashless server 10 to the cashless instrument transaction clearinghouse 136 may contain all or some subset of the information stored on the cashless instrument being validated.

The foregoing is further evidence that Rowe does not teach a central authority arranged to store the validation code and a credit amount received from the network in response to generating the print medium as claimed. If a validation code and credit amount had been stored in server 136, there would be no need for the request for validation to include information stored on the cashless instrument being validated.

In the response to arguments, the Examiner relies on a bank computer as the central authority. However, a bank computer would not meet other features of the central authority limitation of claim 1, such as, for example, storing the validation code. In the response to arguments, the Examiner also relies on a central server shown in Fig. 4 (presumably server 100). However, as explained earlier, server 100 is a local server, and as explained later, that server does not transmit the stored credit amount through the network to the interface in response to validation of the validation code, the credit amount being displayed on the display. For th s reasons alone, claim 1 is allowable.

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Rowe also does not t ach a central authority arranged to validat the validation code as claimed. As shown in Fig. 4 at steps 424 and 426, the validation request is sent from central clearing house 136 to a local server 100 to determine whether the cashless instrument is valid. In Col. 14, lines 25-27, Rowe teaches that validation occurs at a local database, not a central authority as claimed:

> In 426, the cashless server 100 checks the local cashless instrument transaction database to confirm the request for validation received in 424 is valid.

In summary, Rowe teaches that validation is done at a local database, not by a central authority as claimed. In the response to arguments, the Examiner relies on Col. 12, lines 53-54 in an attempt to show that the server validates the validation code. However, lines 53-54 are silent about what is validated. As pointed out above, validation occurs at the local level, not at a central server. Claim 1 is allowable for this reason alone.

Regarding transmitting the stored credit amount through the network to the interface in response to validation of the validation code, the credit amount being displayed on the display, the Examiner relies on Col. 12, line 32 – Col. 14, line 48 (last two lines on page 2 of the Office Action.) The undersigned has read this section without finding anything that would teach or suggest such transmitting and display. The response to arguments also do not appear to address this point. Claim 1 is allowable for this reason alone.

For all the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is allowable over Rowe.

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Claims 2-4, 6, and 8-9 are depend nt on claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Contrary to MPEP § 707.07(g), the Examiner has offered no reason for rejection of the foregoing dependent claims and has not applied any prior art to such dependent claims. Thus, the undersigned has no reasonable basis for amending or commenting on any of the foregoing dependent claims, and they are believed to be allowable.

Claims 10-12 are analogous to claims 1-3 and are allowable for the same reasons as claims 1-3. Claims 16-17 are allowable for the same reasons as claim 8-9. Claim 14 is dependent on claim 10 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 10.

The rejection of claims 7 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowe in view of Stockdale et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,251,014; "Stockdale") is respectfully traversed. Claim 7 is dependent on claim 4 (and claim 1) and is allowable for the same reasons as claims 4 and 1. Claim 15 is dependent on claim 13 (and 10) and is allowable for the same reasons as claims 13 and 10. Claim 7 reads:

7.   (Previously Presented) A gaming system according to claim 4 wherein the central authority transmits to the interface through the network a validation code before a cashout signal is generated.

Stockdale does not teach or suggest transmitting a validation code. In Col. 17, line 64 through Col. 18, line 5, Stockdale teaches that only "critical events" are stored on both a peripheral controller and a master gaming controller. A validation code could not involve a "critical event" because the Examiner states that Rowe does not disclose that the central authority sends a validation code before a cashout signal is generated. If a validation code were a "critical event," Rowe could not avoid sending th validation code

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before a cashout signal is generated as claimed. Thus, no one skilled in the art would be motivated to combine Rowe with Stockdale, because Stockdale does not suggest transmitting a validation code, which cannot represent a "critical event." For all the foregoing reasons, claim 7 is allowable.

In the response to arguments (page 5), the Examiner states:

the transaction/validation information would be transmitted to the peripheral device before the cashout signal is generated in order to back up the information at the central authority in case of a power failure at the central authority. Therefore, the claimed invention fails to preclude Rowe's gaming network.

The Examiner's statement that "information would be transmitted" is respectfully traversed. Regarding that statement, if the Examiner is asserting Official Notice that the subject of the statement is common knowledge, the applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's assertions. Alternatively, if the Examiner's assertions are based on the personal knowledge of the Examiner, then under MPEP § 2144.03(C) and 37 C.F.R. § 1.104(d)(2), the Examiner's assertions must be supported by an affidavit from the Examiner. The applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of the Examiner's statement is not well-known in the art as evidenced by the searched and cited prior art. The Examiner's search has failed to yield any mention of the teachings that the Examiner states "would be transmitted." The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide a reference(s) in support of the assertion of Official Notice if the Examiner intends to maintain a rejection based on Official Notice (MPEP 2144.03).

Claim 15 is allowable for the same reasons as claim 7.

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In summary, each of claims 1-4, 6-12 and 14-17 is allowable, and such action is respectfully requested.

Date: April 20, 2004   Respectfully submitted,

Ronald E. Larson
Reg. No. 24,478
Attorney for Applicant

McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd.
500 W. Madison, 34th Floor
Chicago, IL 60661
312 775-8000

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